REMARKS

This communication is a full and timely response to the Office Action dated July 1, 2009. Claims 1-10 remain pending. By this communication, claims 11 and 12 are canceled without prejudice or disclaimer to the underlying subject matter, and claims 1 and 8 are amended.

In numbered paragraph 11, claim 8 is objected to for an alleged informality. Applicants respectfully traverse this objection. However, in an effort to expedite prosecution this claim is amended to address the Examiner's concerns. Therefore, withdrawal of this objection is respectfully requested

Applicants claims were variously rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103. Namely, in numbered paragraph 13 on page 4 of the Office Action, claims 1 and 3-9 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) for alleged unpatentability over *Tindal et al* (U.S. Patent Publication No. 2002/0069274) in view of *Stallings* ("SNMP and SNMPv2: The Infrastructure for Network Management.") and *Shorter et al.* (U.S. Patent Publication No. 2003/0004822); in numbered paragraph 14 on page 10 of the Office Action, claims 2 and 10 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as allegedly being unpatentable over *Tindal et al* in view of *Stallings* and further in view of Menezes et al ("Hash functions and data integrity" Handbook of applied cryptography); and in numbered paragraph 15 on page 12 of the Office Action, claims 11 and 12 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as unpatentable over *Tindal* in view of *Stallings* and *Shorter*, and further in view of *Vetter*. Applicants respectfully traverse these rejections.

The Examiner maintains that that the combination of *Tindal*, *Stallings*, and *Shorter* renders independent claims 1 and 8 unpatentable. However, the prior art

combination does not disclose or suggest all of the claim features as is required to establish a *prima facie* case of obviousness. Because claims 1 and 8 are amended to include the subject matter previously recited in canceled claims 11 and 12, respectively, the rejection of claims 1 and 8 will be addressed with respect to the rejection of claims 11 and 12.

Independent claims 1 and 8 are directed to a method of validating a consistency of attributes of entities. The method is implemented in a system having a multitude of different IT systems and the attributes associated with the entities are stored in data sets of the multitude of different IT systems. As is provided in the disclosure, Applicants provide examples of a number of IT systems used to monitor and control physical assets in a utility, such as stations, lines, transformers, breakers, regions, and areas. *See* Applicant's disclosure, pg. 1, lines 11-12.

For example, a supervisory control and data acquisition (SCADA) system carries an electrical view on assets in order to open/close breakers, monitor voltages, currents, or capacity limits. A computerized maintenance management system (CMMS) manages management for physical assets and includes work reports and new work orders. Id., pg. 2, lines 1-7.

Thus, based on Applicants' disclosure one of ordinary skill would understand that each entity is stored in multiple data sets of an IT system, which monitors and controls a utility operation, and models a station, line, transformer, breaker, regions, and areas of the utility operation.

In order to enable a consistency service to access the actual attribute values of an entity, reference or meta-information about the entity is stored in a storage device. This information comprises, e.g., a local identifier in order to access the

entity in the application, and an application identifier which allows the consistency service to direct any requests related to that entity to an adapter of the IT system of the application. The adaptor is used to acquire and translate the requested information from the application via a polling mechanism and without a need for modifying the application. The reference information is the single source that has to be updated in case the utility adds new IT systems or applications.

The Examiner alleges that in disclosing the use of network devices and network device configuration records, *Tindal* discloses entities that model a physical asset of a utility and are stored in data sets of a multitude of different IT systems of the utility, as is recited in claims 1 and 8. However, nothing in *Tindal* associates the network device configuration records or their associated network devices with a multitude of IT systems. Rather, as discussed above, *Tindal* is merely directed to system and method of configuring and monitoring network devices. *See* Tindal, Fig. 1.

In contrast, *Shorter* discloses a system that includes disparate retail channel IT systems. Each IT system is associated with one of multiple retail channels. The retail channels being related to different store operations such as a Web Store, Call Center, Brick & Mortar, and PVC Device gateway. *See* Shorter, Figs. 1 and 2. *Shorter* is directed to using adapters for each IT system to process common data among the retail channels and form a peer-to-peer network.

From the disclosures of both *Tindal* and *Shorter* one of skill in the art would understand that the network configuration record as described in *Tindal* does not include an entity as is recited in Applicant's claims nor does this reference disclose the use of multiple IT systems as claimed and as is known in the art from *Shorter*.

Thus, the mapping of Applicant's claim elements to the disclosure of *Tindal* is misguided and improper given the knowledge afforded one of skill in the art.

Applicants are fully aware that during examination claims must be given their broadest reasonable interpretation. This "interpretation", however, must be consistent with Applicants' Specification. *Phillips v. AWH Corp.*, 415 F.3d 1403 75 USPQ2d 1321 (Fed. Cir. 2005). In *Phillips*, the Court found that when employing the "broadest reasonable interpretation" standard, **the PTO determines the scope of claims in patent applications not solely on the basis of the claim language, but upon giving claims their broadest reasonable construction "in light of the specification as it would be interpreted of one of ordinary skill in the art**." *In Re Am. Acad. of Sci. Tech. Ctr.*, 367 F.3d 1359, 1364 [70 USPQ2d 1827] (Fed. Cir. 2004). Indeed, the rules of the PTO require that application claims must "conform to the invention as set forth in the remainder of the specification and the terms and phrases used in the claims must find clear support for anteceding basis in a description so that the meaning of the terms in the claims may be ascertainable by reference to the description." 37 CFR 1.75 (d)(1), 415 F.3d at 1316, 75 USPQ2d at 1329.

Applicants submit that the Examiner has not followed the broadest reasonable interpretation standard set forth by the Federal Circuit given the description of the embodiments provided in Applicant's disclosure and the knowledge afforded to one of skill in the art as evidenced by *Shorter*. Particularly, given Applicants' discussion of entities and their relationship to a multitude of different IT systems and a consistency service one of skill in the art would understand that these features do

not read on general network configuration records and network devices as disclosed in *Tindal*.

Stallings is applied to remedy the deficiencies of *Tindal* as it relates to disclosing each IT system having an adapter to communicate with the consistency service. *Stallings* discusses an SNMP technique for managing IP-based networks by defining a protocol for exchanging information between one or more management systems and a number of agents, provide a framework for formatting and storing information, and defining a number of general-purpose management information variables. *See* Stallings, pg. 1, col. 1. However, *Stallings* does nothing to remedy the deficiencies of *Tindal* as it relates to Applicant's claimed entities, multiple IT systems, and a consistency service.

As discussed above, *Shorter* discloses a peer-to-peer multi channel retailing system, in which common data such as customer identification data is shared between the different channels. The data can be created or modified at any channel, that is, the data is replicated across multiple retail IT systems. *See* Shorter, pgph [0013]. As a result, internal tables can indicate the location of other retail channels. Id., pgph [0027]. This disclosure notwithstanding, however, *Shorter* still does not disclose or suggest entities and a consistency service as recited in the claims.

The Examiner concedes that the combination of *Tindal*, *Stallings*, and *Shorter* fails to disclose or suggest that the different IT systems include any combination of a supervisory control and data acquisition system, a computerized maintenance management system, and a geographic information system. *Vetter* is relied upon in an effort to remedy this deficiency.

Vetter discloses a plant or facility that includes a substation 1, assets 2, application programs 3, and asset information documents 4. The system is designed to exchange asset information by maintaining a centralized asset information document 4 that contains information associated with assets of the plant. Each application program may write information to and read information from the document. The Examiner cites various portions of *Vetter*, which allegedly disclose the features previously recited in claims 11 and 12. However, there is no teaching or suggestion that the plant or facility includes different IT systems as recited in the claims.

In summary, *Tindal*, *Stallings*, *Shorter*, and *Vetter when* applied individually or in combination as alleged by the Examiner fail to disclose or suggest every feature and/or the combination of features recited in the claims. Namely, the prior art combination as alleged does not embody a system or method that includes at least the claimed combination of entities modeling a physical asset of a utility and stored in data sets of a multitude of different IT systems of the utility, and a consistency service. For this reason, withdrawal of this rejection is respectfully requested.

Because claims 2 and 10 depend from independent claims 1 and 8, respectively, Applicants respectfully submit that these claims are allowable for at least the same reasons discussed above with regard to their respective base claim. In addition, these claims are further distinguishable over the applied references by virtue of the additional features recited therein. Thus, because *Menezes* fails to remedy the deficiencies of *Tindal*, *Stallings*, and *Shorter* with regard to entities modeling a physical asset of a utility and stored in data sets of a multitude of

different IT systems of the utility, and a consistency service, as recited in the claims.

Therefore, withdrawal of these rejections is respectfully requested.

CONCLUSION

Based on the foregoing amendments and remarks, Applicants respectfully

submit that claims 1-10 are allowable and this application is in condition for

allowance. In the event any unresolved issues remain, the Examiner is encouraged

to contact Applicants' representative identified below.

Respectfully submitted,

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